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ABSTRACT

Based on the rural life experiences of Iowa children who grew up during the great farm crisis of the 1980s, this book focuses on successful adolescent development and its links to the social resources of families with ties to the land. In 1989, the Iowa Youth and Families Project began a panel study of 451 two-parent families in north central Iowa. Each family included a study child in seventh grade and a near sibling; 75 percent of families had ties to the land--active farming, recent displacement from farming, or parental farm background. Data were collected annually, 1989-92, and again in 1994 when the study child was in 12th grade. The study used a life-course approach to identify the chain of influences by which exposure to life in a farm family affects the relative success of rural youth. Success includes academic achievement, self-confidence, maturity, social competence and status, and avoidance of problem behavior. The influences of family continuity in agriculture, family resourcefulness, children's productive work, family ties to and leadership in the community, grandparents, church attendance, and student participation in school activities and youth programs are examined in relation to adolescent development of competence and resilience in the face of adversity. Appendices present methodology,

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indicators used, and data tables. (Contains approximately 270 references, extensive notes, and an index.) (SV)

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